

THE CASE FOR APARTHEID

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THE "Christian way of life", or "Democracy", or "Inter-racialism", or any other "way of life" that I can think of, mean different things to different people at different times, depending on who they are, where they are and what they are. And so it is, too, with "Apartheid". If some White men in South Africa see in it a ready instrument for the maintenance of their traditional world of supremacy over the Black man, some Black men in South Africa support it because it offers them an adequate and practical escape from the White man's historical position of superiority. And if some Black men, anywhere, look upon it as a device for the permanent subjection of their interests to that of the White man, most White men in South Africa support it because it is "the one way of freeing Whites and Blacks from an entanglement with each other which is bad for both but worse for the non-Whites". Whoever, therefore, sets out to write about Apartheid must write about it as he understands its fundamental aims and objects; and if he is a politician who supports the Party which propagates it, he will not escape the inclination to try and influence public opinion, and eventual Government action, along his own line of thought.

As I see it, there is nothing new in the concept of Apartheid: Wherever there lives a nation which prizes its national separateness and entrenches its future existence behind political boundaries, there the fundamental *principle* of Apartheid is accepted and applied. The struggles of nations, races, religions and cultures to retain their separate identities is common politics all the world over. That, in its essence, is the philosophy of Apartheid. So, the teaching of Apartheid is the simple doctrine of nationalism. And far from its having originated in the Union of South Africa, it is the very driving-force which has lately brought national separateness, or independence, to Hindu and Moslem in India, to Jew and Arab in Palestine, and to Tunisian and Moroccan in Northern Africa.

Looking at the wide hostility which South Africa alone has to contend with abroad, on account of this philosophy of nationalism, it is, therefore, more than astonishing to note that it was not inside South Africa, but outside, and not in the bad old days of rampant imperialism but in the current period of post-war liberalism, that the principle of Apartheid has scored its two most glaring

successes. The one was in India, as I have just pointed out. Here people, in a political set-up which had already become historical, found it so impossible, on account of religious, social and other differences, to live peacefully together in an integrated society that they had to be separated, or a-parted, into independent spheres of human activity called Bharat and Pakistan. The other was in Palestine where Jew and Arab, on account of historical, religious, racial and cultural diversities and ambitions, found a policy of integration so utterly dangerous to the peace and happiness of that part of the world, that they resorted to the only practical solution, namely Apartheid—and that under the very aegis of the United Nations Organisation itself!

Our tragedy in South Africa seems to be twofold. Firstly, that we have not yet achieved the successes which gained world approval for Apartheid in India and Palestine. Secondly, that the realities of history and the exigencies of party politics have combined here to cloud and confuse the fundamentals of Apartheid with the coincidence of Colour.

It began with the early beginnings of South Africa itself, when civilized immigrants from Europe settled in South Africa and (a century later) came up against uncivilized immigrants from central Africa, who also wanted to settle in South Africa. The civilized immigrants happened to be white; the uncivilized immigrants happened to be black. Had the natives from central Africa differed from the natives from Europe only in the matter of pigment, the latter would probably have welcomed them into their society—and the story of South Africa would have run a different course. But it immediately became clear that the immigrant from central Africa was not a “White man” with a black skin, as the immigrant from Europe was not a “Black man” with a white skin. The differences between them were far more radical than the colour of their skin. The European settlers noted their warlike nature, their different social institutions, their primitive subsistence economy, their different language, their witchcraft and ancestor worship, and, in general, their primitive way of life. And colour being the most noticeable difference, Colour came to be associated in the mind of the White South African with all these attributes. And so the coincidence of Colour became the dividing line—the bar to social contact and to equal political rights and responsibilities.

It is a very welcome fact that a small percentage of Bantu have since become “Westernized”. But then a new nation of White Africans (no longer Europeans) has arisen at the foot of Africa (not

by conquest but by colonization), and to-day the national differences between it and the vast majority of the eight-and-a-half million Black Africans are still so pronounced that the White people remain as strongly averse to the idea of integration as ever. They believe integration would bring about the dissipation of their national and cultural identity and their eventual domination, through sheer weight of numbers, by the Bantu.

In short, the new (White) African nation will resist with tenacity its domination by any other nation—were it to come from within (from the Bantu, by force or by infiltration) or from without (let us say from the Russians, by force or by a process of immigration). It is difficult to believe that any other nation, anywhere in the world, would act differently in the same circumstances. Gen. Smuts himself stated: "No Government in South Africa would have the power to get out of that position. . . . That is the fundamental position from which we start. That is the Colour Question". Yes, that is how we have simplified the issue, and what we call our "Colour Question" and our adversaries call our "Colour Prejudice".

But there need be nothing disparaging about Separate Development. Apartheid is not primarily a problem of Colour and an attitude of anti-Colour. When our statesmen proceed overseas they mix freely with the statesmen of a different colour. Because our way of life in South Africa is not at stake there. In 1954 I was one of twelve South African Members of Parliament, of all Parties, who attended the Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Nairobi, and we spent several weeks formally and informally eating, travelling and staying together in East Africa with non-White Parliamentarians from Pakistan, Ceylon and the British Dependencies. Again, because our national existence was not at stake there.

What the (White) South African nation want is not the wanton domination of the Bantu. They want to safeguard their security and preserve their identity, yes. They want to obviate the domination by the numerically stronger and culturally different Bantu nations of a homeland which they have so laboriously led to peace and prosperity. They realise that their present policy of Paternalism toward the Bantu cannot endure; that the boy becomes a man; and that the Bantu nations, too, have legitimate national aspirations and a right to the highest possible development of their talents. Naturally they would welcome the valuable assistance of the Bantu in the economic development of their living space. In return they are

more than willing to help the Bantu to a higher cultural basis and a better standard of living, and with a courageous and forward policy of development of its living space. But they believe that where one or more nations, each with its own aspirations and way of life, have to share and develop under the same political ceiling, a brute struggle for supremacy, with all its attendant pain and injury, is bound to ensue.

Politically the only dynamic solution which has so far offered itself to them—and which has proved successful on the Indian as well as the African Continent—is that of Apartheid; of Separate Development or National Separateness. It aims at the establishment of one or more permanent National Homes, with eventual Home Rule, for the Bantu, alongside a permanent National Home for the (White) South African nation. As the Prime Minister and leader of the National Party, Mr. Strijdom, so clearly put it in his first Christmas message to the Bantu in 1954: “The Government will, as in the past, continue to lead you along the path of self-development to maturity . . . to self-reliance and independence”. Which means there is nothing necessarily repressive in the principle of Apartheid—that intrinsically it is a policy of equal opportunities and equal privileges, only in distinct and independent spheres of activity.

The question is: Is it possible and can it succeed in South Africa? The practically-minded Tomlinson Commission certainly think so. The scientifically-minded South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra) think so. The spiritually-minded Dutch Reformed Churches think so. And the politically-minded National Party think so. Fertile areas seven times the extent of England and Wales and nearly twice the size of France already stand reserved for the purpose. Will enough of the Bantu co-operate? Much will depend on the methods of the ruling nation and the attitude they adopt in proceeding to establish the New Deal. It should not be impossible for them to win the goodwill of the Bantu. The prospect of enjoying greater economic opportunities and reaching the higher privileges of citizenship in well developed national homes is bound to attract support. Will the (White) South African nation, as the ruler of it all, face up to the full implications of the task? It is difficult to foretell how the continually changing world will lead them to act to-morrow and the day thereafter; but it won't be unreasonable to believe that the majority of them, in the spirit of the Hindu philosopher's Wise Man, “when faced with total disaster, will give up half and save the rest”.